Procurement of Natural Rubber

1647. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of natural rubber procured by State Trading Corporation from Kerala during the current year;

(b) whether Government would consider to extend Central assistance to the State of Kerala for promoting the procurement of Rubber;

(c) whether Government have taken any step to get the natural rubber classified as an agricultural product in the WTO list; and

(d) whether Government persuaded the WTO for the same and the action taken in the matter so far and the decision, if any, arrived at?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) During the current financial year, a quantity of 1512 MT of Natural Rubber was procured by State Trading Corporation (STC) for supply to Advance Licence Holders. With the fixation and notification of minimum price which is based on import parity price, the procurement of Natural Rubber through STC on Government account is not considered necessary and has therefore been discontinued.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. In the ongoing negotiations on Agriculture, India has proposed that the product coverage of the Agreement on Agriculture requires rationalisation by including primary agricultural commodities such as rubber. It has also been proposed by India that developing countries should be allowed to rationalise low tariff bindings by raising them to the ceiling bindings for similar category of products committed during the Uruguay Round.